



Montana Children's Initiative
a provider association for montana's children and families

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SENATE FINANCE & CLAIMS

Exhibit No. 16
Date 3-18-11
Bill No. HB-2

March 18, 2011

Good evening, Chairman Lewis and members of the Finance & Claims Committee, my name is Dennis Taylor. I am the policy coordinator for the Montana Children's Initiative (MCI), a 17 member provider organization providing children's mental health services, shelter care and foster parent services in virtually every county in the state of Montana.

Listening to the exchange this morning between the Budget Director and the Committee, I was reminded of the African proverb. "When elephants fight, the grass suffers."

Speaking on behalf of the grass, your community-base service providers, we humbly ask the committee resist the Governor's recommendation to roll back provider reimbursement rates to 2009 levels and to implement a three year freeze on provider reimbursement rates.

The Executive budget recommendation regarding DPHHS provider reimbursement rates for children and family services is ticking time bomb that is set to go off in your local communities during the next biennium unless you restore and increase provider reimbursement levels. The DPHHS budget currently funded in HB 2 rolls community-based service provider rates back to 2009 levels and freezes those rates in 2012 and 2013.

This morning, the department talked about "tightening their belts." We would just like to remind the committee that when the department tightens its belt, it is the community-based providers who feel the pinch.

Children mental health providers, shelter care providers, children's disabilities providers and foster parents are strained to a filament. Current costs for heating, transportation, food, clothing and shelter are increasing at alarming rates. Montana service providers are already struggling to survive in the face of these staggering cost increases. It is simply unrealistic to think they can shoulder the full burden of providing services in the face of such serious inflation for three full years without some relief.

Without a reversal of the Executive's proposed rates reduction and an adequate provider reimbursement rate increase in the next biennium, many community-based providers will not survive to continue their partnership with you to care for our most at risk children—children with serious emotional disorders, mental illness and other challenging behaviors—in the most appropriate, least restrictive and cost effective setting is seriously in jeopardy.

The MCI urges your favorable consideration of the proposed amendment to restore provider reimbursement rates to 2010 levels in HB 2 and to approve a 3% provider reimbursement rate for 2012 and a 3% provider reimbursement rate in 2013.

Thank you.



Montana Children's Initiative Provider Association 2011 Legislative Session Agenda

Mission: Working together for an effective efficient system that cares.

Montana Children's Initiative Members

Acadia Montana, Butte
Bitterroot Valley Educational Co-op, Stevensville
Billings Clinic Psychiatric Services, Billings
Excel, Inc., Billings
Florence Crittenton Home & Services, Helena
Intermountain, Helena & Kalispell
Kairos Youth Services, Great Falls
Montana Youth Home RMDC, Helena
Montana State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association
Montana Community Services Inc., Billings
New Day, Billings
Partnership for Children, Missoula
Watson Children's Shelter, Missoula
Western Montana Mental Health Center, Missoula, Kalispell, Butte & Bozeman
Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch, Billings
Youth Homes, Missoula
Youth Dynamics, Billings, Helena & Kalispell

MCI Legislative Priorities

1. Support increased provider rates and budgets for child welfare, juvenile justice and children's mental health serves.
2. Support continuation and strengthening the DPHHS Rate Commission.
3. Advocate for an initiative or study to address needs of children transitioning/aging out of services.
4. Expand Medicaid coverage for children aging out of foster care to 21 years of age.
5. Expand Healthy Montana Kids mental health benefit package.

Children's Disability Services

**A professional association of agencies who provide services to
children with disabilities and their families**

2011 Legislative Session Agenda

Children's Disability Services Providers

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CDC---Child Development Center, Missoula
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Children's Disability Services 2011 Legislative Priorities

- Support Part C Early intervention services expansion.
- Support continued funding for the autism waiver.
- Support the creation of a separate waiver for children services.
- Support a provider rate increase.